DC

ATARI FORCE™

2

ATARI FORCE

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PART TWO

CHAPTER ONE:

BERSERK

COMMANDER CHAMPION... DOCTOR ORION...

...THANK YOU FOR MAKING THE TRIP HERE FROM SOLAR SATELLITE STATION ONE! *

WE KNOW YOU WOULDN'T HAVE CALLED US BACK TO THE ATARI INSTITUTE WITHOUT GOOD REASON, MR. DIRECTOR!

* SEE ATARI FORCE #1, IN ATARI'S "DEFENDER" CARTRIDGE. --EDITOR.

BUT WHY SUCH TIGHT SECURITY?

WE HAVE WHAT WE THINK ARE GOOD REASONS, DOCTOR.

PROJECT: MULTIVERSE IS TOP SECRET--

AH, 'TIS A *RUDE AWAKENING* YOU'RE IN FOR, MR. DIRECTOR!

SAD TO SAY, YOUR DEAR *SECURITY* ISN'T QUITE SO *TIGHT* AS YOU MIGHT *THINK!*

--AND FOR THE *SAKE* OF OUR WAR-WEARY WORLD, WHAT'S *REVEALED* TO YOU TODAY--MUST *NEVER* *LEAVE THIS ROOM!*

THE YEAR: 2005 A.D.

THE PLACE: THE *NORTHCAL HEADQUARTERS* OF THE *ATARI TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE,* IN THAT PART OF NORTH AMERICA THAT USED TO BE KNOWN AS *CALIFORNIA* BEFORE THE "*BREAK-UP*"...

THE SITUATION: *A WORLD IN CRISIS...*

FOR ALL YOUR FINE *TECHNOLOGY*--

--ALL YOUR *RADAR* AND *HEAT-SENSITIVE SENSORS*--

--A MERE SLIP OF A GIRL HAS MANAGED TO MAKE HER WAY INTO THE VERY *HEART* OF YOUR "*WELL-GUARDED*" *ATARI COMPLEX!*

SURE, AND IT'S AS I ALWAYS *SAY*--

"*ANY* SECURITY SYSTEM CAN BE BEATEN.

"ALL IT TAKES IS *TIME*--

"--AND A LITTLE *INGENUITY!*"

TAKE THIS *SOUND-PROOF PLASTIGLAS DOME*, NOW.

IT'S *SUPPOSED* TO KEEP AN EAVES-DROPPER FROM HEARIN' THE *SECRETS* BEING WHISPERED BELOW.

BUT, WITH A PORTABLE *STETHA-SCAN*...

...YOUR VOICES COME THROUGH AS CLEAR AS *SUNRISE* OVER *DUBLIN BAY!*

--*PROJECT: MULTIVERSE* IS THE CODE NAME FOR AN ATTEMPT TO BREAK THE *DIMENSIONAL BARRIER* THAT SEPARATES US FROM AN INFINITY OF *ALTERNATE WORLDS!*

"ALTERNATE" WORLDS?

WORLDS WHOSE *HISTORY* DIVERGES FROM OUR OWN, COMMANDER.

BUT ISN'T THAT JUST A *FANTASY?*

PURE *SCIENCE FICTION?*

PLEASE, DOCTOR...LET THE DIRECTOR *EXPLAIN*...

...*WITHOUT* ANY MORE INTERRUPTIONS!

SECURITY BASE STATION, SUB-LEVEL SEVEN...

CAPTAIN, I'VE GOT A WEIRD READING ON THE INTERNAL MONITOR.

IT COULD BE ANOTHER SHORT-CIRCUIT, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND--

PUT IT ON THE SCREEN, TECHNICIAN. LET'S SEE WHAT YOU HAVE.

THERE, SIR-- THAT BLIP INDICATES AN UNAUTHORIZED MEAT SOURCE IN SUB-LEVEL SIXTEEN!

INCREASE MAGNIFICATION.

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, SIR.

AIR CONDITIONING AND POWERLINE MAINTENANCE AREA

SOMEONE-- OR SOMETHING-- IS IN THE MAINTENANCE AREA ABOVE THE SUB-LEVEL SEVENTEEN CONFERENCE ROOM!

GREAT SCOTT!

AREA

INTRUDER ALERT!

WE HAVE A "BERSERK SITUATION" IN QUADRANT SL-16!

LOCAL UNITS RESPOND IMMEDIATELY--

--ISOLATE AND CONTAIN!

AYE-AYE, CAPTAIN--

--UNIT FOUR ON THE SPOT AND TAKING CHARGE!

THAT'S THE ACCESS HATCH TO THE MAINTENANCE AREA, TED.

LET ME TAKE POINT, SARGE!

I HANDLED PATROLS LIKE THIS DURING THE WAR.

NOT A CHANCE, YOUNGSTER.

ONE THING I LEARNED... BE VERY, VERY CAREFUL...

KLICK

HISSSSSSS

--EXCUSE ME, MR. DIRECTOR, BUT BEFORE YOU GO ANY FURTHER, I THINK AN INTRODUCTION IS IN ORDER.

LUCAS ORION AND I ARE FRIENDS --AND I KNOW ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PEREZ FROM SOME YEARS BACK--

BUT YOU ARE ASKING YOURSELF--

"WHO IS THIS SILLY MAN PLAYING WITH CAT'S CRADLE WHILE THE DIRECTOR SPEAKS OF SAVING WORLDS?"

YES, YES.

THIS *IS* WHAT YOU ARE THINKING.

WELL THEN, MY NAME IS *MOHANDAS SINGH.*

MY PRESENCE HERE IS AS MUCH A MYSTERY TO *ME* AS TO *YOU.*

THE MOHANDAS SINGH?

THAT'S *RIGHT,* MARTIN.

THE MOHANDAS SINGH...CO-INVENTOR OF THE *MICRON COMPUTER CHIP,* CO-INVENTOR OF THE *SINGH-LAZLO DIFFRACTION DRIVE...*

...AND DIRECTOR OF *COMPUTER RESEARCH* HERE AT THE INSTITUTE FOR THE LAST *THREE YEARS!*

MAYBE *NOW* YOU'RE BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND HOW *IMPORTANT* THIS PROJECT IS!

OF COURSE, I WOULDN'T *EXPECT* AN EX-JOCK *MILITARY MAN* LIKE YOURSELF TO--

WHAT ON *EARTH* IS THAT?

BREE BREE

ALARMS-- SOME KIND OF *RED ALERT!*

FLASHING LIGHTS...*RED* FLASHING LIGHTS...

EH? WHAT'S HAPPENING TO SINGH?

HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S GOING INTO A TRANCE...!

NOT A TRANCE, BUT RATHER, A REVERIE...

. AN UNWILLING FLASH-BACK OF MEMORY TO A TIME TWENTY YEARS BEFORE, IN THE CROWDED STREETS OF NEW DELHI, WHEN A MUCH YOUNGER MOHANDAS SINGH LIVED THE WILD LIFE OF AN URBAN ORPHAN IN THE WORLD'S MOST DESPERATE CITY..

HE WAS POOR-- HE WENT HUNGRY EVERY DAY, OR SO IT SEEMED--

--BUT IN ONE AREA OF HIS LIFE, HE WAS RICH.

HE HAD A FRIEND. A FELLOW URCHIN WHO CALLED HIMSELF RAJA.

MOHANDAS-- WAKE UP-- A TOURIST!

A BRITISH RAJ, TOO--MAYBE WORTH A FEW COINS, IF YOU BEG RIGHT!

HMM WHAT'S THIS?

WHAT DO YOU WANT, YOU LITTLE SCAMP?

PLEASE, SIR, A FEW PENCE FOR FOOD--?

FOOD, AY?

HOW YOU CAN EAT IN THIS BLOODY HOT CLIMATE, I'LL NEVER KNOW

STILL, YOU LOOK LIKE A GOOD BOY--

--AND I SUPPOSE A FEW BOB IS THE LEAST I CAN-- EH?

MY WALLET-- GONE!

PLAYING FAGIN'S GAME, ARE YOU?

ONE OF YOU DISTRACTS ME WHILE THE OTHER PINCHES MY PURSE!

NO, SIR, I NEVER..

POLICE!
I'VE BEEN ROBBED!
GANESH L
RUN, MOHANDAS!
THE POLICE WILL NEVER BELIEVE US OVER A RICH WHITE RAJ!
RUN!

EVEN IN MEMORY, MOHANDAS SINGH CAN FEEL THE POUNDING OF HIS HEART THE PURE, PHYSICAL TERROR THAT GRIPPED HIS CHEST AND MADE EACH BREATH AN AGONY
HE RAN WITHOUT REALLY KNOWING WHY..

AND OF THAT NIGHTMARE MORNING, ALL HE CAN TRULY REMEMBER IS THE WAIL OF SIRENS AND THE POLICE CAR'S FLASHING RED LIGHTS..
BREE BREE
MY WORD.
WHAT HAVE I DONE?

BREE BREE

NOT THAT WAY, RAJA!

YOU'RE HEADING TOWARD THE JUMNA --

BREE

--WE'LL BE BLOCKED BY THE RIVER!

BREE BREE

BUT PANIC GUIDED RAJA'S FLIGHT--

--AND BLIND FATE TWISTED HIS FOOT ON WET STONE STEPS!

THUNK

RAJA NEVER EVEN CRIED OUT.

MOHANDAS SCREAMED FOR BOTH OF THEM--

RAJA!

HE WILL *NEVER* FORGET.

THE *LIGHTS*, THE *SOUNDS*, SEARED INTO HIS *BRAIN*

BREE BREE BREE BREE BREE

IN SPITE OF HIS *POVERTY*. IN SPITE OF *DAILY HUNGER* AND CONSTANT *FEAR*...

...UNTIL THAT MOMENT, HE HADN'T *KNOWN* WHAT IT MEANT TO BE POOR.

I'M *SORRY*. THIS WAS MY FAULT...

I WAS THE *WORST* KIND OF FOOL, SEEING WHAT I *EXPECTED* TO SEE--NOT WHAT *WAS*.

MY NAME IS MILES-- *PROFESSOR STANLEY MILES.*

I'M HERE FOR A *SYMPOSIUM*-- THE WORLD *GEOPHYSICAL YEAR*, YOU KNOW

AHH..BUT OF COURSE, YOU *DON'T* KNOW

SEE HERE. I CAN'T BRING YOUR *FRIEND* BACK TO LIFE BUT PERHAPS I CAN GIVE *YOU* A LIFE..

BUT SINGH WASN'T *LISTENING* IN HIS MIND, HE STILL *HEARD* THAT TERRIBLE *SIREN WAIL*-- STILL SAW THOSE *FLASHING LIGHTS*--

-- AND EVEN NOW, *TWENTY YEARS LATER*, THEY THROW HIM INTO A KIND OF *TRANCE*, UNTIL--

-- SINGH. *SINGH*, SNAP OUT OF IT!

ARE YOU *ALL RIGHT?*

Y-YES.. *YES*, COMMANDER, VERY MUCH *ALL RIGHT*

I WAS JUST-- *EH?*

PROFESSOR MILES PAID HIS DEBT IN *FULL*, BY SENDING MOHANDAS SINGH TO THE FINEST SCHOOLS ON *THREE CONTINENTS*, AND RECOGNIZING THE *FINE MIND* THAT HAD ALMOST BEEN *SUFFOCATED* BY OVERWHELMING *POVERTY*...

...A MIND THAT NOW FOCUSES WITH INSTANT ALERTNESS ON NEW INPUT, CAUSING MOHANDAS SINGH TO CRY OUT:

COMMANDER, DIRECTOR--THERE IS THE CAUSE OF THE ALARM!

A SPY!

SO MUCH FOR SIX YEARS OF TRAINING IN THE MARINES--I NEVER EVEN LOOKED UP!

I THOUGHT YOU TOLD US PROJECT: MULTIVERSE WAS TOP SECRET, PEREZ!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, MARTIN--SECURITY WAS SO TIGHT--!

DEAR LADY IF I RAN MY MEDICAL RESEARCH DEPARTMENT THE WAY SECURITY APPARENTLY HAS RUN THIS OPERATION--

OKAY, SISTER, END OF THE ROAD!

WH-WHA--?

--I'D SOON HAVE NO *PATIENTS* LEFT *ALIVE!*

SAABSE! SHE'S JUMPIN' AROUND LIKE SOME KIND OF KANGAROO!

TOO CLOSE TO USE MY WEAPONS- LASER WITHOUT HITTING YOU!

GOTTA GET SOME ROOM TO MANEUVER OR SHE'LL--

SHAK

THUD

'TIS A PITY YOU *HESITATED* WHEN YOU SAW YOU WERE FACING A FAIR *COLLEEN!*

CHUNK

SURE, AND THAT WAS YOUR *FIRST* MISTAKE!

KRAK!

YOUR *SECOND* MISTAKE WAS IN NOT *STUNNING* ME WHEN YOU HAD THE CHANCE!

YOU'VE GIVEN ME THE *PRECIOUS MOMENTS* I NEED TO *ESCAPE--*

AND NOW 'TIS WHAT I'LL *DO!*

TA!

GREAT HEAVENS--

--SHE'S SLIPPED INTO THE *VENTILATING DUCT* THAT LEADS TO THE *SCANNER ONE HANGAR!*

SCANNER ONE IS THE VERY *HEART OF PROJECT: MULTIVERSE!*

EVEN *SECURITY* ISN'T ALLOWED ON THIS LEVEL!

HURRY-- WE HAVE TO *STOP* HER-- BEFORE SOMETHING *DISASTROUS* HAPPENS!

THE PROTECTIVE HATCH *UNSEALS* WITH A PNEUMATIC HISS, AND *COMMANDER CHAMPION* LEADS THE OTHERS THROUGH THE DOUBLE-LOCK.. DRAWING UP *SHORT* ON THE FAR SIDE ..

. HIS BREATH LITERALLY *STOLEN* BY THE SIGHT BEFORE HIM...

SO *THAT'S* THE BIG SECRET--

CHAPTER TWO:
UNMASKED

--SCANNER ONE IS A SPACESHIP!

OH, MARTIN-- DON'T BE SUCH A BLIND IDIOT!

HOW CAN A SPACESHIP TAKE OFF FROM INSIDE A SEALED ROOM?

PEREZ, YOU MUST LEARN TO CURB THAT SHARP TONGUE OF YOURS!

COMMANDER CHAMPION CAN BE FORGIVEN FOR JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS.

FOR NOW, LET ME ASSURE YOU, COMMANDER-- YOU COULDN'T BE MORE WRONG!

CLANG!

IT'S HER-- THE INTRUDER!

SHE'S GOT TO BE STOPPED BEFORE SHE CAN REACH SCANNER ONE! SHE MIGHT BE CARRYING EXPLOSIVES--SHE COULD BE A SABOTEUR--!

WHATEVER SHE IS, MR DIRECTOR-- AND WHOEVER SHE WORKS FOR--IT'S A SAFE BET SHE DIDN'T WANDER IN HERE LOOKING FOR THE LADY'S WC!

SHE'S EQUIPPED-- AND TRAINED-- FOR COMBAT--

--AND THAT SUITS ME FINE!

MY, MY!

YOUR COMMANDER CHAMPION IS MOST AGGRESSIVE, IS HE NOT?

MARTIN, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE--!

LET HIM BE, DOCTOR

I THINK I RECOGNIZE THAT WOMAN DOWN THERE--

--AND IF MY GUESS IS RIGHT, WE'RE IN FOR QUITE A SHOW!

HI-YAAAH!

NOT BAD.

YOU'RE FAST.

SURE, AND IT'S MORE THAN MERELY FAST THAT I AM, COMMANDER.

WHOOSH!

I'LL SAY!

THEY DIDN'T TEACH US TO FIGHT WOMEN IN THE MARINES, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN--

--BUT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A QUICK STUDY!

IF THAT HAD COME EVEN A CENTIMETER CLOSER--UHNH!

TELL THE TRUTH NOW, COMMANDER

'TIS MORE OF A STRUGGLE THAN YOU EXPECTED, BESTING THIS LITTLE LASSIE!

AH, AND IF THAT'S THE CASE, MY LAD--

--THEN YOU'VE STILL GOT A LOT TO LEARN!

YEEOWW

UNNH!

I DON'T GET IT--YOU COULD'VE SNAPPED MY NECK LIKE A DRY TWIG--

--BUT INSTEAD, YOU RE LAUGHING AT ME!

HAHA

ADMIT IT, COMMANDER, YOU MAKE A FRANTIC SIGHT!

WHOOPS!

YOUR FACE-- I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE--!

THAT YOU HAVE, COMMANDER, ON THE INSTITUTE REPORTS'

THE NAME'S O'ROURKE LI SAN O'ROURKE...

..EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ATARI SECURITY!

IT'S A LITTLE FIELD TEST OF OUR SECURITY PERSONNEL THAT I'VE BEEN RUNNING--AND A SORRIER LOT OF OVER-ARMED BUMPKINS I'VE NEVER SEEN!

YOU LADS DEPEND TOO HEAVILY ON YOUR FINE COMPUTERS AND SOPHISTICATED SENSORS.

SORRY IF I VE DISRUPTED YOUR LITTLE PARTY, MR DIRECTOR. BUT AS YOU KNOW, ATARI HAS ITS ENEMIES--AND VICIOUS THEY ARE, TOO, SINCE THE WAR

WE HAVE TO PROTECT OURSELVES--AND THAT MEANS WE MUST BE CONSTANTLY ALERT!

YOU'LL HAVE NO ARGUMENT ON THAT FROM ME, O ROURKE.

IN FACT, I'M GLAD YOU RE HERE...

..SINCE I WAS ABOUT TO *SUMMON* YOU, WHEN OUR "*PARTY*," AS YOU CALL IT, WAS SO RUDELY *CRASHED!*

O'ROURKE, YOU'RE THE *FIFTH* AND *FINAL MEMBER* OF A NEW TEAM WE'VE DESIGNATED THE ***ATARI FORCE!***

OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS, WHILE YOU WERE ATTENDING TO YOUR *REGULAR DUTIES*, EACH OF YOU RECEIVED *EXTRA TRAINING* IN THE OPERATION OF A NEW COMPUTER--

--THE *ATARI 8000*, THE MOST ADVANCED CYBERNETIC "*BRAIN*" EVER DESIGNED!

THE *ATARI 8000* IS THE GUIDANCE COMPUTER OF THIS VESSEL, *SCANNER ONE*.

THUS, WITHOUT *KNOWING* IT-- FOR REASONS OF SECURITY--YOU'VE BEEN TRAINING FOR MONTHS FOR THIS, THE MOST *IMPORTANT* ASSIGNMENT OF YOUR LIVES!

NOW, IF YOU'LL WATCH YOUR *STEP*--

--I'LL SHOW YOU AROUND.

THIS FIRST COMPARTMENT IS THE MASTER AIRLOCK.

WHAT HAVE WEAPONS TO DO WITH A MISSION OF EXPLORATION?

WEAPONS EVERYWHERE, I SEE MOST STRANGE

DON'T BE NAIVE, SINGH

WE MAY HOPE FOR PEACE--

--BUT WE MUST BE READY FOR WAR!

MY FATHER WAS A SOLDIER, AND MY MOTHER, TOO.

SHE WAS CHINESE--HE WAS IRISH--AND THEY RAISED ME IN AN IRELAND TORN BY CIVIL WAR FOR MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS!

"AND SO, WHEN THE FIVE DAY WAR BROKE OUT, SEVEN YEARS AGO, ON OCTOBER 18, 1998, I WAS READY. OR SO I THOUGHT.

"MY UNITED NATIONS PARATROOP UNIT WAS PART OF A SPECIAL RESPONSE FORCE TO BE DROPPED BEHIND ENEMY LINES..."

"DURING THE FIRST HOURS OF THE WAR, AFTER THE ATTACK ON NASA'S LUNAR COLONY THAT STARTED THE WHOLE MESS, THE ENEMY OCCUPIED A MAJOR OIL FIELD IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA.

"OUR MISSION WAS TO FREE THE OIL FIELD-- WITHOUT GIVING THE ENEMY A CHANCE TO DESTROY IT.

"I WAS A LIEUTENANT-- IN CHARGE OF MY OWN SQUAD.

"SAINTS PRESERVE ME, BUT I THOUGHT I WAS GOD'S SPECIAL CHILD, AND THAT NOTHING COULD HARM ME"

CHAPTER THREE:

SPOILS OF WAR

"I WAS ALMOST RIGHT."

THAT'S ONE LESS ANTI-AIRCRAFT LASER TO BE BURNIN' OUR LADS LIKE TARGETS AT A SKEET SHOOT!

BWHOOM!
WHEN YOU HIT THE GROUND, TAKE COVER BEHIND THOSE TANKS!
WE'LL HAVE TWO MINUTES TO REGROUP, AND NOT A SECOND MORE!

"BERTHA BAKER WAS MY SERGEANT, AND THE CLOSEST FRIEND I HAD IN THE ARMY--HELL, SHE WAS MY ONLY FRIEND..."

WE'RE STILL MISSING HALF THE SQUAD, LIEUTENANT!

SHOULD WE WAIT--?

NO.

THE MISSION COMES FIRST-- MOVE OUT!

YOU'RE THE BOSS, LIEUTENANT!

THOSE BUNKERS ARE OUR TARGET!

INTELLIGENCE REPORTS THE ENEMY IS MOLED UP IN THERE-- WITH RADIO CONTROLS SET TO BLOW UP THIS WHOLE REFINERY AT THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON!

"I WINCED AT THE DISAPPROVAL IN HER TONE, BUT AFTER ALL, WE WERE SOLDIERS--WE WERE PAID TO TAKE RISKS, IT WAS OUR DUTY AND OUR HONOR.

"THE OTHERS WOULD JUST HAVE TO CATCH UP...

"...IF THEY COULD."

OUR FLYBOYS ARE LAYING DOWN A COVERING BOMBARDMENT.

WE HAVE TO GET INSIDE--DEFUSE THE EXPLOSIVES--AND CLEAN OUT THOSE BUNKERS!

BERTHA, LASS, IT'S YOU I'LL BE DEPENDING ON TO DEFUSE THOSE EXPLOSIVES

TAKE FOUR LADS AND SWING AROUND TO THE COMPOUND'S FAR SIDE--

--WHILE I LEAD THE MAIN ASSAULT!

"LUCK" WASN'T PART OF MY VOCABULARY, SINGH; I FIGURED WE DIDN'T NEED LUCK, WITH PROPER PLANNING AND EXECUTION.

ON MY WAY, LIEUTENANT

GOOD LUCK!

"BUT WE HAD LUCK, WE DID-- AND ALL OF IT WAS BAD!"

BLAST IT!

THE CONTROLS ON THESE EXPLOSIVE-PACKS ARE MORE COMPLICATED THAN WE EXPECTED!

CAN YOU DEFUSE IT, SARGE?

HELL, YES--

--BUT IT'LL TAKE TIME!

TIME...!

"AT LEAST SURPRISE WAS STILL ON OUR SIDE..."

BM-BOOM

YAAAH!

THAT'S THE WAY, LADS!

THEY WEREN'T EXPECTING A FRONTAL ASSAULT!

HIT THEM--AND HIT THEM *HARD*, BEFORE THEY CAN--

ZACK!

AAAH!

"A WEAPONS-LASER, FIRED AT TWENTY FEET, CAN CUT THROUGH FLESH LIKE A HOT KNIFE THROUGH SOFT BUTTER

"MY ARM WENT DEAD, BUT SOMEHOW I REMAINED CONSCIOUS--

"--AND I SAW ONE OF THE ENEMY RUNNING TOWARD A MASTER CONTROL PANEL THROUGH A GATHERING *RED* HAZE."

NO!

THAT'S... THE *REMOTE CONTROL* PANEL... FOR *EXPLOSIVES*.!

CAN'T *LET* YOU.. REACH IT...!

BERTHA... OTHER SOLDIERS .. STILL *OUT* THERE...!

STOP... *STOP*...!

BOOM BOOM

"THAT'S WHEN I LEARNED THE ONLY IMPORTANT LESSON OF WAR, SINGH.

"NOT ONLY DOES WAR CLAIM YOUR ENEMIES--"

MY ARM!

OH DEAR LORD!

CLICK

"--IT ALSO CLAIMS YOUR FRIENDS!"

BOOM!

"THE EXPLOSIONS ECHOED LIKE NEAR THUNDER-- BUT I DION T HEAR THEM

I'D GONE CRAZY-- STRIKING THAT ENEMY SOLDIER AGAIN AND AGAIN, SOBBING WITH GRIEF--

"--UNTIL, FINALLY, MY MEN HAD TO DRAG ME AWAY.

"YOU SEE, SINGH, I THOUGHT GOD WAS ON MY SIDE . THAT I COULDN'T BE HURT

BUT I'D FORGOTTEN THAT SOME OF WAR'S WORST WOUNDS. . ARE THE WOUNDS YOU NEVER SEE."

FORGIVE ME LI SAN, BUT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I AM SURPRISED YOU'RE NOT A *PACIFIST*

BUT I *AM*, SINGH

AFTER *THE WAR*, I QUIT THE ARMY-- AND JOINED *ATARI*

BEING WILLING TO *DEFEND* YOURSELF --AND BEING A *PACIFIST*--ARE *NOT* MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE!

IF YOU *SAY SO*, LI SAN.

I FEAR *DOCTOR ORION* MIGHT *NOT AGREE!*

GOTTA HAND IT TO YOU *BRAIN-BOYS*, MR DIRECTOR

YOU'VE BUILT *SOME* KIND OF SHIP

YOU SAY ATARI'S SCIENTISTS HAVE LABORED *SIX YEARS* ON THIS PROJECT?

AND ALL THE WHILE, WE IN *SECURITY* NEVER HAD AN *INKLING* OF WHAT YOU WERE UP TO!

AYE, I'M *IMPRESSED!*

WE *HAD* TO KEEP IT A SECRET EVEN FROM *YOU*, O'ROURKE

THE WORLD MAY NO LONGER HAVE *NATIONS* TO CONSPIRE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER--

--BUT *ATARI* HAS ITS OWN ENEMIES, CHIEF AMONG THEM *THE CO-OP!*

LIKE *ATARI*, THE *CO-OP* A COLLECTION OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED MULTINATIONAL *CORPORATIONS* IS SEEKING A SOLUTION TO THE WORLD'S MOST *DIRE* PREDICAMENT--

--A HEMISPHERIC *DROUGHT* THAT HAS REDUCED THE AMOUNT OF ARABLE LAND BY ALMOST A *MILLION ACRES* OVER THE PAST SEVEN YEARS

SOME BELIEVE THIS DROUGHT IS A RESULT OF *THE WAR*, A KIND OF *GREENHOUSE EFFECT* CAUSED BY *FALLOUT* FROM THE *DEATH-BOMBS* UNLEASHED BY BOTH SIDES

FORTUNATELY, ONLY *TWO* DEATH-BOMBS WERE EXPLODED IN THOSE LAST HOURS BEFORE OUR ENEMY'S GOVERNMENT *COLLAPSED*..

--OTHERWISE, WE WOULD *NOT* BE STANDING HERE TODAY

IN ANY CASE, EVEN THOUGH GREATLY *REDUCED*-- THE WORLD'S *POPULATION* IS IN DANGER OF *IMMINENT STARVATION!*

PROJECT MULTIVERSE IS AN ATTEMPT TO *ALLEVIATE* POTENTIAL FAMINE --BY LOCATING *INHABITABLE WORLDS* AMONG THE INFINITY OF *ALTERNATE REALITIES* EXISTING IN OTHER DIMENSIONS PARALLEL TO OUR OWN!

SUCH WORLDS MAY BE *PRIMITIVE JUNGLES*--

--FUTURISTIC *PARADISES*--

--OR *UNDERWATER WONDERLANDS!* EACH WILL BE *UNIQUE*, WITH ITS *OWN* CULTURE, ITS *OWN* HISTORY!

SOMEWHERE AMONG THOSE MANY *POSSIBLE WORLDS*, YOU WILL FIND A PLANET MUCH LIKE OUR OWN *EARTH*.

AN UNINHABITED WORLD OF *FERTILE FIELDS*.. *GREEN HILLS*.. *BLUE SEAS*.. UNTOUCHED BY MAIMING *WAR*.

WHEN YOU FIND THIS WORLD, *RETURN* TO US-- AND WE WILL BEGIN *COLONIZATION*.

THERE YOU *HAVE* IT! YOUR *MISSION* IN A NUTSHELL

NOW, I MUST *DEPART*...

...AND SO MUST *YOU*.

FAREWELL... AND GOD-SPEED.

THE *DIRECTOR*-- *DISAPPEARING*--?

HE WAS NEVER TRULY *PRESENT*, COMMANDER CHAMPION.

WHAT YOU SAW WAS A *HOLOGRAM*-- *PROJECTED* BY *ME*.

HUH?

AND WHO ARE *YOU*?

I AM YOUR ATARI 8000 COMPUTER, COMMANDER.

AT YOUR SERVICE. THE DIRECTOR AND I THOUGHT *THIS* KIND OF INTRODUCTION WAS *BEST*.

NOW I SUGGEST YOU TAKE YOUR FLIGHT STATIONS AND PREPARE FOR DEPARTURE

THE LIGHTED FLOOR-PANELS WILL LEAD YOU TO THE NAVIGATION SECTION. THE SECURITY COMMAND POST.. AND THE MEDI-LAB.

WE'LL BEGIN WITH A SHORT TRIP--JUST A FEW DIMENSIONS--AS A WARM-UP, YOU UNDERSTAND.

IS EVERYONE COMFORTABLE?

SECURITY OFFICER O'ROURKE?

TIS ALL HAPPENING SO FAST, MY HEAD'S BEEN SENT TO SPINNING!

BUT TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, LADDIE--AYE, I'M AS COMFORTABLE AS A LEPRECHAUN WITH HIS OWN POT OF GOLD!

EXCELLENT. AND YOU, FLIGHT ENGINEER SINGH?

I AM BREATHLESS AND AWED, BUT SUCH, AFTER ALL, IS THE NATURAL CONDITION OF MAN.

OTHER THAN THAT--

--I TOO AM QUITE COMFORTABLE.

NO NEED TO ASK HOW I'M DOING, COMPUTER

MY GREATEST DESIRE IS TO HELP HUMANITY RECOVER FROM THE MADNESS OF THE WAR.

THIS IS LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE

I TAKE THAT AS AN AFFIRMATIVE, DOCTOR COMMANDER CHAMPION...MISSION PILOT PEREZ...

ARE YOU READY?

I CAN'T SPEAK FOR MY EXECUTIVE OFFICER, COMPUTER--

--BUT I'M STRAINING AT THE BIT

ONE POINT, THOUGH--DON'T WE NEED SOME HANGAR DOORS UP THERE?

HOW DO WE GET OUT?

WE DON'T NEED HANGAR DOORS, COMMANDER--

--BECAUSE WE ARE NOT TRAVELING THROUGH SPACE, NOR EVEN THROUGH TIME!

HMMM

OUR VOYAGE IS THROUGH MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS!

MMM

LIKE THE CHESHIRE CAT IN ALICE IN WONDER-AND," WE SHALL BE ERE ONE MOMENT, AND IN THE NEXT OMENT, WE SHALL BE--

MMM

GONE!

GOOD LORD.

WHERE ARE WE?

WE'RE IN THE *VOID* BETWEEN *DIMENSIONS*, COMMANDER.

ALL SYSTEMS ARE GO.

SINGH... O'ROURKE, ORION.. ANY PROBLEMS?

NONE, MARTIN.

SCANNER ONE IS SECURE!

MARTIN..OLD FRIEND. HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A SIGHT AS BEAUTIFUL?

NEVER, LUCAS.

IT'S LIKE *GAZING* INTO THE FACE OF GOD.

WHY, COMMANDER, A *POETIC* THOUGHT..!

I'D NEVER HAVE *EXPECTED* IT--

--FROM A DUMB JOCK?

I'M *FULL* OF SURPRISES, PEREZ

...AND SO ARE *YOU*, LYDIA.

BEFORE THIS TRIP IS OVER, I'M GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT'S *BUGGING* YOU, PEREZ.

I THOUGHT WE WERE *FRIENDS*--BUT YOU'VE BEEN *CRITICAL* OF ME EVER SINCE WE GOT BACK TOGETHER!

THE *MYSTERIES* OF THE *MULTIVERSE* AREN'T THE *ONLY* MYSTERIES WE'RE GOING TO UNRAVEL ON THIS VOYAGE.

THAT'S A *PROMISE!*

FOR NOW--THE END!

THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES-- READ THE NEXT EXCITING CHAPTER IN THE SAGA OF THE ATARI FORCE, IN: **STAR RAIDERS**™ *AVAILABLE SOON!*

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